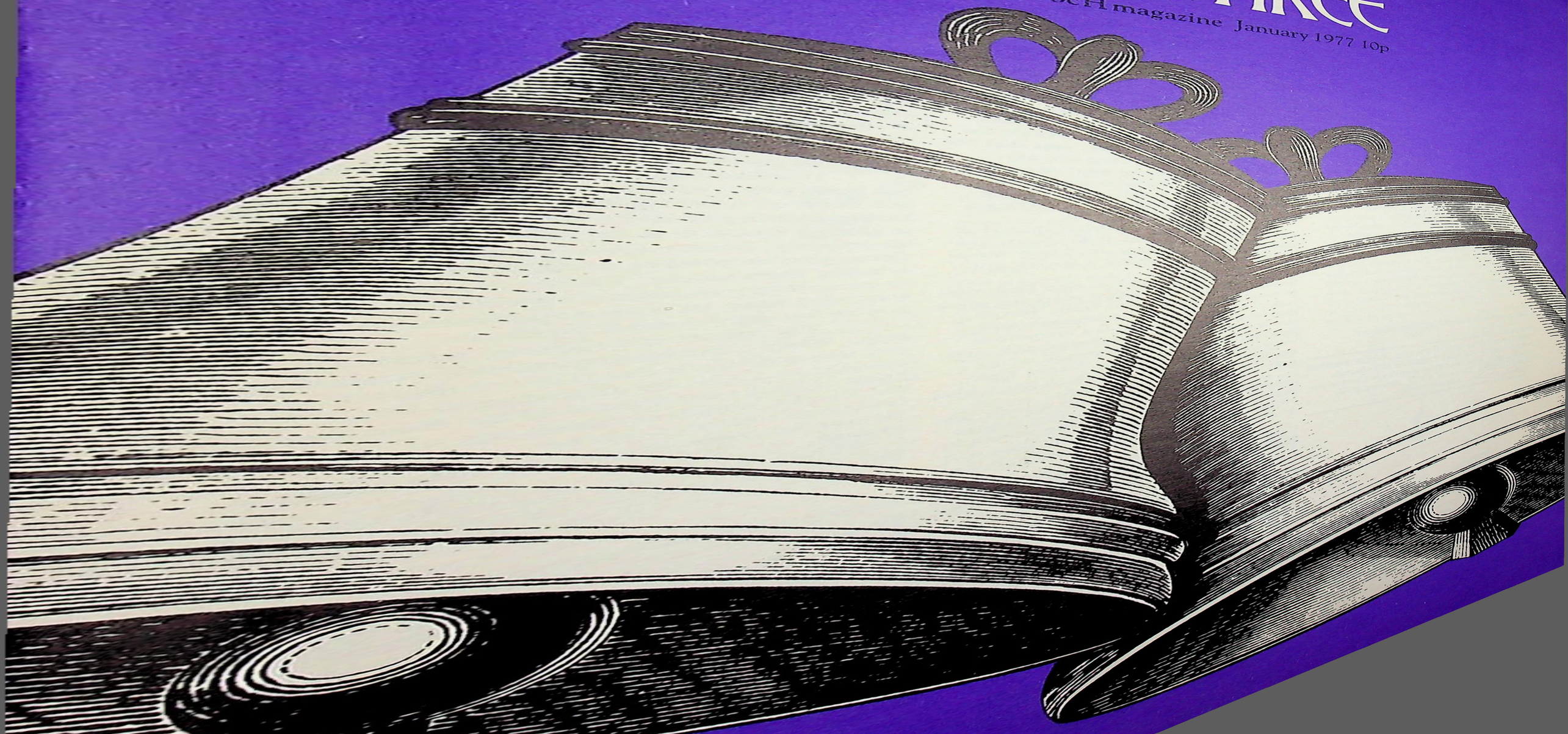
POINT THREE

The TocH magazine January 1977 10p



POINT THREE

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Letters and articles are welcomed and should be addressed to the Toc H Editorial Office, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT (Telephone: 0296 623911)
Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement.

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Front cover
Happy New Year to all our readers!

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS
The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will open our new Port Penrhyn Centre on Wednesday 22 June 1977, during their Silver Jubilee visit to Wales.

VIEWPOINT

Common opinion has voted Central Council as the best in years. It's certainly heartening to pick up enthusiastic comments and to read councillors' letters in this vein. For once it really seems to have been an inspiring weekend which left many with renewed vigour and determination to go back home and put their hopes and ideas for Toc H into action.

There were signs at the Council this year that Toc H is now thinking positively and is 'on the up'. Perhaps this reflects the new positive note of leadership from the top; perhaps it reflects the fact that it is only in the last year that the Regions have been anything like adequately staffed. But for whatever reason, new groups here and there around the country are echoing this optimism and more and more people are discovering a new vitality within themselves.

This, of course, is what John Hull and his 'Whoops Factor' is all about. Do read his address on page six; it may seem lengthy at first glance but it is undoubtedly worth a read.

The confidence that Ken Prideaux-Brune urged us to find two years ago must, in some parts, have borne fruit. But the task of revitalising the Movement (and that means you and me) is a mammoth one and the confidence we need will only be sustained if we are convinced of the value of what we're doing. Hence Ken's emphasis on thinking out which particular contribution Toc H can make.

This, as Ken says in his speech, was the whole point of the discussion groups at Council. They are to be seen as simply the start of a debate which hopefully will be carried on in branches throughout the country and which can obviously be linked to the discussions on the Archbishops' Call to the Nation .

As John Callf wrote in *Second Wind:* 'Toc H can never contract out of what is going on in the world; least of all can it act as if chopping wood for old people is all that is required . . . . Thank God for the doers . . . but we need too the spirit of thinking.'

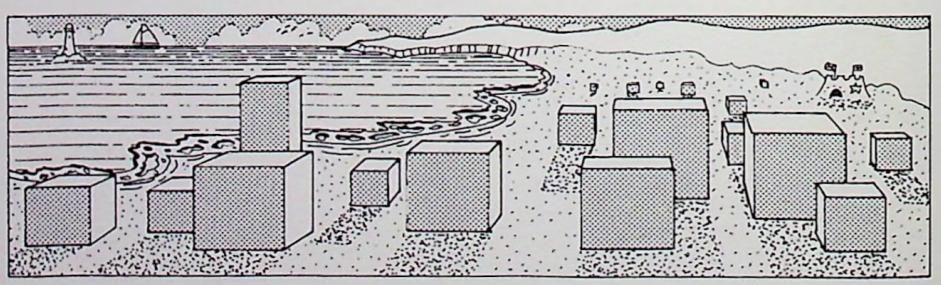
Possibly the worst indictment of Toc H would be that it is wound up in useless activity. Yet we all know the story of the branch which was so behind the times its members were still chopping wood when there was no longer an open fire in the town.

It seems that you can get caught out both ways: either in ricocheting from one burst of frenetic activity to another, hardly pausing to draw breath; or, indeed, in getting stuck in a rut, so you go on laboriously, even painstakingly, doing the things you've always done without reconsidering their value. Either way can lead to completely misdirected effort. Either way, you have to stop and think of what you're letting yourself become.

The secret is to know when to stop. When I'm chasing myself round in ever-decreasing circles, I am sometimes brought to a halt by this stupid little jingle from Lewis Carrol (*The Hunting of the Snark*), which reminds me of how futile one's efforts can be:

'He had forty-two boxes, all carefully packed,
With his name painted clearly on each;
But, since he omitted to mention the fact,
They were all left behind on the beach.'

S McW



Toc H seeks to create friendship and understanding among people of all backgrounds and beliefs. Local group activities range from holidays for the handicapped and children's playschemes to arts festivals and even bird-watching. Toc H is short for Talbot House: the soldiers' club in Belgium founded by the Reverend 'Tubby' Clayton in 1915. Today Toc H provides opportunities for people to test the relevance of practical Christianity and we welcome anyone who would like to give us a try.

Members accept a four-fold commitment:
1. To build friendships across the barriers that divide man from man.

2. To give personal service.

3. To find their own convictions while always being willing to listen to the views of others.

4. To work for the building of that better world which has been called the Kingdom of God.

This magazine, which acts as a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world in which we live, takes its title from the third of these Four Points – to think fairly.

'Best in Years'

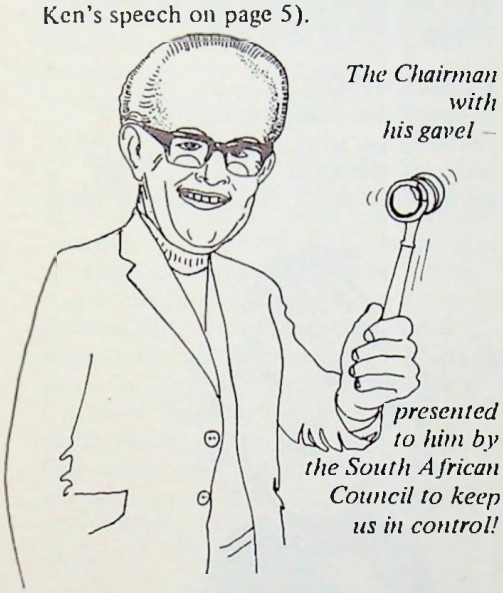
Central Council 1976

The 1976 Central Council was voted the best in years. For once it was a really inspiring weekend and many councillors came away with a renewed confidence and sense of purpose.

ANNUAL REPORT

The Council readily accepted the Annual Report, and Janet Rauch (CEC) commented that it was the brightest for many a year.

In presenting the Report, Director Ken Prideaux-Brune stressed that our priority in the coming year must be to think more deeply about the Movement and to develop a clearer understanding of its role and purpose in today's world. The group discussions held on the Saturday afternoon were designed to be the start of this thinking process. (see full text of Ken's speech on page 5).



The Chairman with his gavel – presented to him by the South African Council to keep us in control!

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Honorary Treasurer, Gerry Ashfield, clarified the main points of the Accounts. Gerry stated that 'from a financial point of view at least, Regionalisation has certainly been a success in the first year'. Some Regions have done better than others, but overall, Regional income exceeded overhead expenditure by over £3,000 (ie not counting expenditure on salaries, pensions and housing). But taking the balance sheet for the whole Movement, there is a deficit of £100,725.

Gerry was obviously disappointed with the record of membership giving, as it averaged out at only £3.61 per head (compared with £3.59 the year before). 'Please excuse me for saying so' he said 'but a figure of 1p per day isn't anything to get excited about. It shouldn't be beyond our capabilities to make that £5 per head.'

There is, however, a painless way of increasing membership giving: by paying your existing contribution in the form of a Deed of Covenant. George Barnett made it clear that you don't have to pay *more* under a Deed of Covenant; the money which you are already paying can be paid in Covenant form and Toc H benefits by an extra 54p in every £. A married woman who does not work can sign a covenant if her husband is paying income tax. The sad fact is that only 2,000 out of a total 15,000 members and builders sign Covenants to Toc H. Full details willingly available from Jerry Sheehan at Wendover HQ.

Several voices were raised on this subject of membership giving and many felt strongly that it was ridiculous for branches to be raising so much money for other organisations.

MOTIONS

EXPANSION POLICY

Tom Gulliver presented a paper on behalf of the CEC, reporting on the financial implications of the expansion policy decided in 1974 (when the Movement called for an increase in staff, following the profitable sale of 15 Trinity Square, London).

Increased expenditure since 1974 combined with the effects of inflation have resulted in a deficit of £100,000. Therefore, as Tom pointed out, 'the financial situation requires careful consideration – although it does not warrant panic measures'.

The CEC therefore proposed (i) that a critical review of expenditure at HQ and in the Regions should be carried out, looking particularly at staff and including an assessment of the value of each Mark (ii) that an acceptable level of expenditure should be established (iii) that we should consider how we can increase our income. This last responsibility must rest primarily with the Regions. There will be a conference on 26 February 1977 where representatives of RECs and CECs can discuss what cuts should be made.

After much heated discussion the proposition was accepted by a substantial majority.

The background to the CEC's thinking went like this:

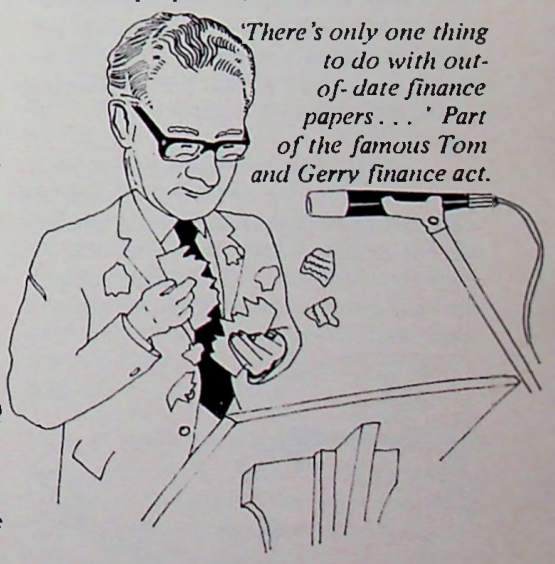
The expansion policy was agreed, as Tom Gulliver explained, because the membership asked that the money should be made available for more staff to work with them in developing Toc H.

He continued: 'To work within our annual income – ie not to touch any part of our capital – would mean a cut back in staff. A policy of not drawing on capital would, in my opinion and in the opinion of the majority of the CEC, be unrealistic, unnecessary and quite unprecedented'.

Unrealistic, because the policy of cutting back on staff (which we have adopted before) doesn't work; unprecedented, because we have used our assets to finance a deficit before; and unnecessary, because, in Tom's words, 'the certainty about the future of Toc H is not to be found in financial investments . . . This Movement has not been sustained over the past 60 years by the size of its investments, nor alone by the dedicated service of its membership, but by the power of the Holy Spirit'.

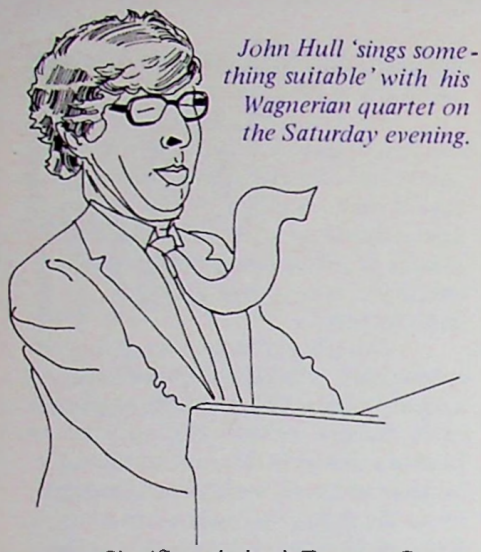
'I am convinced that we have a responsibility to use the resources we have today while the opportunity is before us.'

In seconding the motion, Gerry Ashfield stated his personal opinion that we should aim to reduce our expenditure by 10% and place a definite ceiling on the deficit which we are prepared to incur. 'If we introduce a bit of discipline it should sharpen our minds and help us to a decision of what we want to pursue.' Gerry also pointed out that we have locked up a lot of money in properties from which we get no income at all (ie out of £3 million assets, £1 million 300 thousand is in properties).



'There's only one thing to do with out-of-date finance papers . . . ' Part of the famous Tom and Gerry finance act.

Debate from the floor ranged largely between those who said 'have faith and spend now' and those who felt we should be more realistic and preserve our assets to hand on to future generations. Pat Turner (Beds and North Herts), Keith Beck (staff) and Charles Potts (Wessex: New Forest) all made impassioned appeals to travel on in faith while both Yvette and Arthur Frymann (Erewash and Trent Valley) and (CEC) called for a more stringent pruning of expenditure. (Yvette's motion on this subject automatically fell when the CEC motion was accepted.)



John Hull 'sings something suitable' with his Wagnerian quartet on the Saturday evening.

Significantly both Trustees George Liddle and Betty Cornick opposed the motion, George because he anticipated that this course would mean selling off our assets at an ever-increasing rate, and Betty because she felt that the propositions should be worded far more precisely, in order to make sure that we really do achieve a more realistic level of expenditure.

Tom Dent (South East Herts: West Herts) denounced a policy of despair and said that the thing to do was to knuckle down and increase our income; and Joan Cliffe (North East Lincs) said, speaking as a housewife, she thought we made Toc H too cheap and that we should introduce a small subscription, to co-exist with self-assessment.

SIZE OF CEC

The Council overwhelmingly approved a motion from the CEC that the number of members on this committee should be reduced from 18 to 12 and that the committee should retain the right of two. co-options.

Regionalisation has meant there is less business for the CEC to deal with, and also that more people are needed to manage the Regions. Last year's CEC was conscious of this and accordingly reduced the number of its meetings in the year from seven to six.

5 YEAR RULE

The Council substantially approved the following motion: 'That while this Council encourages the practice whereby members do not hold a particular office for a period longer than five consecutive years, it proposes that the Regulation made by the Council in 1970 limiting tenure of District and Branch office be rescinded'.

In proposing this motion on behalf of the CEC, General Secretary Gilbert Francis stressed that the reasons which lay behind the original regulation remained valid: namely that change of leadership can be healthy and that it is important to encourage new blood in leadership of the branch. However numerous branches had not complied with the regulation (for instance, because of shortage of numbers, or suitable leaders) and on 14 occasions Gilbert had officially waived the rule. The CEC therefore recognised that the rule was unworkable and that a regulation which does not carry the Movement with it, and which cannot be enforced, is a bad one. They did not wish to pursue with a measure which would merely be divisive.

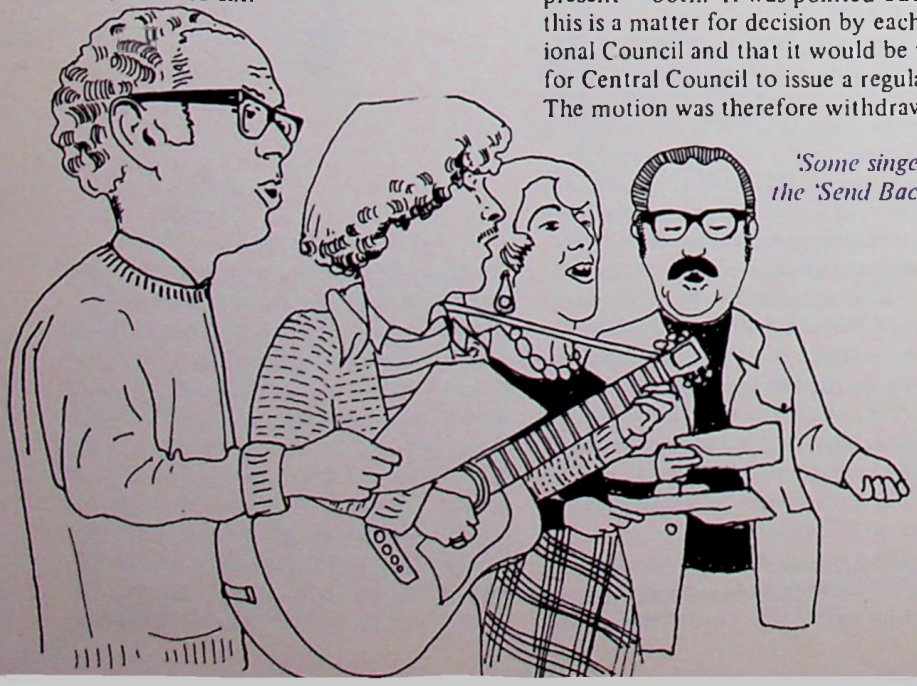
An amendment which would have kept the rule for District officers was lost.

CHRISTIAN BASIS OF TOC H

Council passed unanimously the motion proposed by Yvette Frymann (Erewash & Trent Valley): 'This Council reaffirms the Christian basis of Toc H as expressed in the Main Resolution, and asks branches to consider how they should express this belief now'. Cyril Cattell, Chairman, pointed out that Toc H is not primarily concerned with making public pronouncements and that 'what really matters is what we do about it where we are'.

REGIONAL COUNCILS

Derek Brown (Mid-Cornwall: West Cornwall) appealed that every District should have a representative on the Regional Council, to be elected at the Annual District Meeting. Some Central Councillors represent two Districts and obviously cannot reside in – and, Derek felt, truly represent – both. It was pointed out that this is a matter for decision by each Regional Council and that it would be wrong for Central Council to issue a regulation. The motion was therefore withdrawn.



'Some singers' and the 'Send Back Song'.

TUBBY CLAYTON MEMORIAL FUND

On behalf of the Trustees, George Liddle stated that the first claim on the Fund would now be 'to enable men to offer themselves for the ministry of their respective churches'; men who for financial reasons, perhaps family commitments, would otherwise be precluded from taking up training. This, the Trustees felt, was a cause very dear to Tubby's heart. There will be no strings attached to the grant but each recipient will be asked to learn what he can about Toc H, and thus, the Trustees believe, both the Church and Toc H will be strengthened.

SPOTLIGHTS

Arthur Frymann spoke on the Jubilee Appeal (now standing at £31,463), and Ian Taylor on Port Penrhyn; and those present from the South African tour gave an entertaining report of their trip.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion Chairman Cyril Cattell stressed that 'what really matters is what we as individuals *do* about the things we've talked about, shared and discussed'.

Sue Pottle with some of her wares from the South African trip.

The Director's Speech

Central Council 1976

At the presentation of the Annual Report

The Annual Report is inevitably a selection of events up and down the country. To select from that selection is inevitably invidious, but there are a few things which it seems to me particularly important for us to note.

There are certain things said every year that are elevated almost to sacred traditions. One of these traditions is to complain of our inability to attract young people to Toc H. It is therefore particularly encouraging to read of the formation of a number of young people's groups in various parts of the country – particularly, perhaps, of the groups of teenagers in the North West. It is also encouraging that these groups show a considerable depth of understanding of Toc H.

We have got very worried – rightly worried – over the years about the lack of Toc H in inner city areas – the 'urban situation' as it is called in 'in' circles. It is therefore encouraging to read of, for instance, the formation of the new Inner London District, the launching of the Moseley Centre in Birmingham and Clayton House in Crawley; also of the new life at Gladstone House in Liverpool. These experiments are still in their early days but here are four promising, and quite different, attempts to make Toc H live again in areas where it had practically ceased to exist.

The most sacred of our traditions at these Central Council weekends is to moan about our inability to raise the money we require. I must not anticipate the discussion we will be having a little later but it would be wrong not to mention the remarkable success of the Jubilee Appeal, whose results have greatly exceeded the expectations of the faint-hearted among us. This, and other successful fund-raising efforts, most notably the Norfolk Knitin, show that if we are sufficiently convinced about Toc H we can raise the money we need. If we're seen to be doing a job that needs to be done we shall get the support we need.

Another important feature of the past year has been the recognition of the Church, in three places in particular, of the special contribution that Toc H can make. We have been invited by the Church to start work on the Bretton Estate in Peterborough, and Kevin Lindsay-Smith moved there in August. We have been invited to work with the Church in Kirkby, Liverpool, and Roger Goldsmith moved there as a Long-Term Volunteer just a couple of weeks ago. We are still discussing with the Church how most effectively we may make a contribution in Milton Keynes.

OUR PURPOSE IN SOCIETY

Two years ago it seemed to me that our first priority must be to create a new sense of confidence in the Movement. There are many signs in this Annual Report that we are beginning to have this sense of confidence. I believe that our first priority now needs to be to encourage all our members to think much more deeply about the real purpose of the Movement, to develop a clearer understanding of its function and role in the world of today. We have had for good reasons, to spend an immense amount of time and energy arguing about structures and changed administrative procedures. In the process we have had little time left over to think about our function. It is important now that we devote all our energies to thinking about our function. Because this Movement is never going to grow unless we are absolutely clear about the kind of contribution we have to make in society. It is for this reason that the CEC during the past year has deliberately devoted a substantial portion of its time to discussing what we called 'the main issues'. It is for this reason that we have quite deliberately set aside a substantial portion of our time this weekend for the discussion of the deeper purposes of Toc H. These group discussions are not just an academic exercise. They are not just a way of filling in time. I believe that they are potentially the most significant part of the whole weekend and I hope that they will start conversations which you will continue in your constituencies in the coming year.

In this connection the Archbishops' Call to the Nation has given us a valuable opportunity to talk about the kind of society we want and what we as members of Toc H can do to help bring it about. I have been encouraged by the response I've had to the questionnaires which I circulated to all branches, and by the number of branches which seem to be taking this opportunity seriously. This is all part of the continuing discussion about the purpose of the Movement which is, I believe, essential.

In this context, too, I would like to express a personal welcome to the new publication, *Dimensions*. As a contributor to the first issue I cannot very well comment on its quality, but I am convinced about the need for another publication which will help to stretch our minds.

TWO MAJOR PROJECTS

Two major projects, where decisions have been taken since the Annual Report was written, deserve special mention. A major improvement scheme has been undertaken at Talbot House, Poperinge. Details of the work being done are on display, and a paper is available. I believe that these improvements will not alter or damage the character of the House, but at the same time will prevent it from becoming merely a museum and will give us an opportunity to use it more fully as a base for parties from the UK, and also, more significantly, as a base for a Toc H group in Poperinge itself. And that really would be rather exciting. It is right to say that the Tubby Clayton Memorial Fund has agreed to make a substantial contribution to the cost of the work and that an anonymous donation of £500 has been received from a member who knew the House in the 1914-18 war. These contributions are not only a practical help but a very real encouragement.

The other new major project is the new role for Mark 1, Notting Hill: a co-operative effort between Toc H and members of the Bangladeshi community. There is no time now to talk of all that may flow from this experiment but I think it is of crucial importance that at a time when Paki-bashing once again reared its ugly head Toc H was prepared to stand up and be counted by making a substantial contribution to a project designed to build bridges between ourselves and one of the Asian communities. If we believe all that we say about mixture we need to go beyond the grudging toleration that seems to be the current liberal response to immigrants and say quite firmly and positively that cultural diversity is a positive enrichment of our national life. If it is important to meet and learn across the barriers of class it is just as important to do so across the barriers of race and colour. I am not arguing for a more liberal immigration policy, but I am saying we need a much more welcoming attitude to the immigrants who are already here. That seems to me to be what our Toc H commitment is about and I am glad that the new Mark 1 gives us a chance of putting this into practice.

TOC H A 'MANHUNT'

One final point if I may. It is interesting how often Tubby and the other founders of the Movement described Toc H as a 'manhunt'. The word is more than a little dated, but the concept is, I believe, tremendously important and we need to recover a real sense of what it means. For the founders the starting of branches, however perfect, was never an end in itself. They were quite clear that the purpose of Toc H was to challenge people around them: to challenge people to think more fairly, to challenge people to create a better society, to challenge people to take responsibility for the needs of others. To challenge people to dare to love. I believe that that remains our purpose.

'The WHOOPS Factor'

Central Council 1976

A devotional address by Headquarters Padre John Hull
(abridged with his agreement)

It is a humbling experience to stand before you in the hope that what I say may be of some help. I have no intention of being violently controversial because that is not me.

Well here we are – Toc H today – chosen vessels, leaders, or pushers; giving reality to the dream of Tubby and others, to shed the light of Christian love in whatever ways we can, wherever we may be, not just on Sundays. We are people with our own personal lives to lead with commitments to our families and loved ones and to our jobs; but with an added commitment. This is in all our personal relationships, for we are called to bring Friendship, Service, Fairmindedness, and through these things, to make more real the Kingdom of God on earth.

We aim to do this in a world of mixed priorities where the rich get richer and the poor poorer; the balance of power shifting from West to East; threats and counter threats; intrigue, suspicion, murder – excess in all its aspects on the one hand, poverty, starvation, disease and degradation on the other. Jesus came into it and said 'Love. Forgive.' And they killed him. So where are we today?

Leonard Cheshire would say, 'No true man can rest while there is still human need in the world'. We would agree, but we need the fire in our belly to act.

'Love, forgive' – but how?

Now you may think that I'm contradicting myself when I quote from Oscar Wilde that 'Life is too important to be taken seriously'. We are living in Toc H and true Christian belief, in a topsyturvy world.

Success and failure are empty terms if we are true to our commitment. It is possible that we will never see the fruits of our labours – save those glimpses that God alllows us. The Crucifixion is no success story in itself – to the lookers-on the reward for a perfect life was a criminal's death. We have to look beyond that.

If all this means anything, then I believe it means that the purpose of our lives is not in the future, nor round the next corner, but here and now. It is no happy accident that we use the words of St Francis so frequently: 'Lord make us instruments of thy peace' and all that follows. We don't say 'Make us instruments of thy peace eventually – it's not terribly convenient at the moment!.

To get on with life as a venture of faith is vital. I'm sure we are often held back by thinking too much of our own faith instead of thinking about God. As a result, we are hindered by *'overthink'* because sometimes we even think about what we think about what we think. Spontaneity is lost in the process. Heed Hilaire Belloc's lesson for the young, which I risk quoting again:

'The water beetle here shall teach
a lesson far beyond your reach.
He flabbergasts the human race
by gliding on the water's face
with ease, celerity and grace.
But if he ever paused to think
of how he did it –
He would sink!'

THE WHOOPS FACTOR

Following on from this, I want to concentrate for a bit on an aspect of our Christian Life which I believe is a most important factor of Toc H. I choose to call it 'The Whoops Factor'.

I regret very much that the Te Deum has largely disappeared from worship: 'We praise thee O God . . . ' I believe we need to know that we are living in a different world sometimes, even though we 'render unto Caesar . . . ' Yet if we are true, words like 'Take no thought for what we shall eat, and drink; the Lord knows that you need these things' make a great deal of sense. This is an excitement, an adventure worth celebrating. 'Man is by his very nature a creature who not only works and thinks, but who sings, dances, prays, tells stories and celebrates.' So says Harvey Cox in *Feast of Fools*.

We need more whoops.

Those moments of whoops often defy explanation. Looking over the Vale of Evesham from Dor Knap after a Cotswold Festival, standing with Alec Churcher, John Mitchell and George Lee, we saw sunlight on the hill before Bredon. It was a moment we will never forget. I doubt if it will ever be the same again. We must savour every moment we can. God is very near. This is what Toc H is about and we share these moments with people.

CELEBRATION

Many of you will know my close association with Elizabeth Twistington Higgins who, though totally paralysed, is a pioneer who leads the field in Liturgical Ballet and who paints incredible pictures with the mouth. Yet she also knows of the joy and whoops I am trying hard to talk about.

Dancing in church is nothing new. But I do believe that a Festive Faith is ready to celebrate in the glory of the Dance and that the movement and sensuousness of human bodies in prayer is a fit vehicle for the praise of God. The beauty of it, I cannot describe – you'll have to take my word for it. It is a celebration with a delicate touch.

Toc H can also be seen as a Celebration with a delicate touch, and this is in the realm of personal relationships.

It is my belief that if we are true to ourselves we need to have a dimension of Celebration – a joy of living that will make sense. Not what Toc H does as Toc H, but what *we* do as human beings. But it needs a light touch. Recently linguistic experts have said that more is relayed from person to person through pauses and hesitations of speech than through its words. It takes more time and delicacy to learn the silence of a people than to learn its sounds – something like the holding of hands of lovers from which deep communication may grow; offering love to a dying person, or someone bereaved. When words are inadequate – you hold hands.

Many years ago in Overstrand a home was opened by the Roman Catholic Church for infants who suffered from severe mental and physical handicap – vegetables to all intents and purposes. It was heartrending. But in a few months, the change in them was amazing. It was a response to love; they couldn't understand words. You see, in the end we have to decide how much we are prepared to love.

REAL LIVING

In a beautiful book called *The End of Man* one of the great Christian thinkers of our century, Austin Farrer, says: 'The practice of religion can so easily be substituted for real living, real feeling and real thinking. It is easier to keep up a round of religious activities than to be a good man; easier to repeat accepted dogmas than to be mentally alert; easier to perform routine pieties than to answer the claims that humanity makes upon us'. He does not deny the need for the discipline of worship but that in itself is not enough. The same is true of Toc H; machinery can get in the way so much that it makes a nonsense of what we're about.

Gavin Reid (*Gagging of God*) says that the Church needs to be seen as unselfish: outgoing, compassionate, flexible and travelling light in terms of structures. 'The greatest threat to the gospel is not Communism, apathy, humanism, impurity of doctrine or worldly compromise; it is the

breakdown of communication. Unless Christians can find ways of saying things to the modern *non*-community man, then not only is modern man in a desperate plight and not only is the church facing extinction, but Almighty God himself is gagged.' I believe we can learn from this because it is where we are.

We can and must never deny our allegiance to Christ. Those who would have us do so are misguided, and the evil one still lurks round every corner, though in some circles it might not be fashionable or convenient to talk about it. There may be a place for a group with no Christian allegiance – I won't deny that – but to call it Toc H would be wrong. We clearly stand in responsible human relationships as understood in the Gospels and we can and must embrace as many who would come. It might mean abandoning our present notion of membership, I don't know, but we cannot throw overboard our Christian foundation because we would cease to exist – and we would deserve to.

We exist today because of the strength of our relationships and the prayers of unnamed and un-numbered people. You cannot doubt our existence if you read *Point Three* and the impact this magazine is having outside Toc H is amazing. It disturbs me that we can only sell so few.

The spirit of this Movement depends on our understanding of the Celebration of Life and on our caring enough to pray to God who makes it for us. If we care enough about each other then we pray for each other, and it works. If you would doubt it then try it and you will know that you are not dealing with the empty air. It is a beautiful and exciting thing.

It is not enough to say 'I believe there is a God'. That is something, but not enough. But 'I believe in Him; I put my trust in Him to make me something I would never dream of becoming on my own'. We will go wrong, of course we will. Look at the disciples full of good intentions. Jesus found them sleeping. They all forsook him and fled and Peter said 'I know not the man'. Yet happy is the man who learns from his own failure. He won't learn from anyone else's.

But what we can do is to take 'Leaping with Joy' seriously, and not just recite 'gallant and high-hearted happiness' like parrots; the words might be dated but we know what they mean.

The Whoops Factor is Divine.

I guarantee that the people who have meant more to you than others are those who have conveyed a joy and peace when all around has been woe; those whose brightness shines when they walk into a room. They have got it because they understand something of the beauty of holiness.

We have had and still have our share of Saints in Toc H. Some are here now. I hope we don't wait until they're dead before we recognise it. Not for what they do but for what they are; and I would guess that they have never been bound up with feverish activity.

We need to *stop* and *be*. (Stop at 10.25 am each day and be with us, as the Family at Headquarters stops for prayer.)

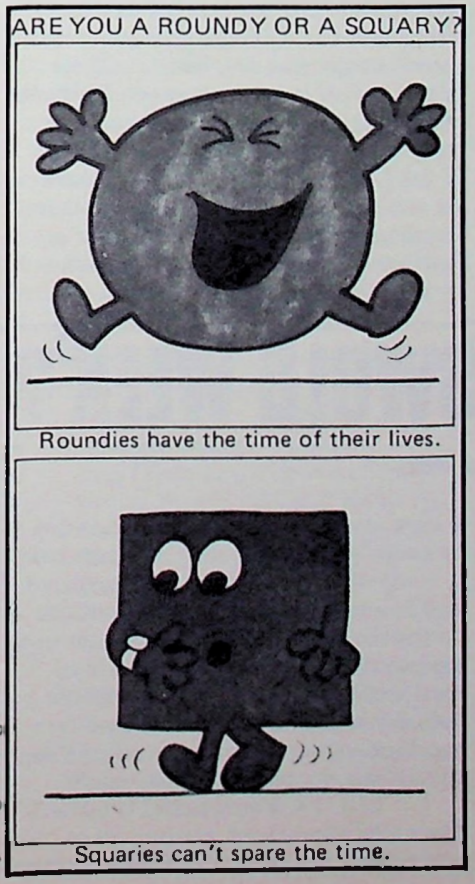
I have used these words before. They belong to Père Charles de Foucauld: 'We are all becoming the prisoners of our own activism. The beauty of holiness in the midst of this revolutionary world belongs only to those who set the Lord always before their eyes'.

We must read the Gospels afresh. Get to the source of our inspiration finding out all we can, and pray that we may really live, laugh and love unselfconsciously, so that we may infect others because we need them – and they are there, waiting. We can't hang about.

May God bless us – every one.

By Roger Hargreaves

The Central Executive Committee 1976/7: Chairman Cyril Cattell, Vice-Chairman Dick Roberts, Harry Brier, John Cutt, Mary Edwards, Arthur Frymann, Jim Lewis, Sue Pottle, David Ratcliff, Janet Rauch, Colin Rudd, Olive Tennant. Ex-officio members: Principal Officers. Tom Gulliver resigns in March on joining the staff.



PROBE

Here is the first of the five study questions about Toc H considered at Council. Branches might like to set aside time to discuss these and could well invite their Central Councillor to join them.
Some of the points raised at Council are included here – not because they represent definitive answers, but simply to provide material for discussion.

Does the Toc H concept of life as learning mean that we have a special role in relating to agnostics, atheists and members of other faiths? Can we do this without undermining our Christian principles? There is evidence that many non-Christians find it impossible to sign the existing membership form with integrity. How important is the concept of formal membership in a fellowship?

Two very different approaches to people of other faiths were cited, both based on personal experience. In India, many years ago, membership of Toc H was clearly seen as meaning commitment to Christ and belief in the Trinity. Members were quite prepared to work alongside Hindus and to count them as their friends, but would not entertain the prospect of involving them in membership because of the social implications: the Hindus would have suffered rejection and isolation from their families and intolerable social tensions would have resulted.

In Uganda, at Kampala Branch, two Hindus, a Sikh and a Parsee had joined on the basis that Toc H was a 'Christianising society' in which no credal test was made. Each of these members was given one of the gospels to read, plus a membership form and Main Resolution. After considerable discussion, the decision of whether or not to join was left to the individual concerned. In these situations, as in all others, sponsors have a serious responsibility both before and after the member has joined.

How important is it to have a committed Christian membership and/or staff? If you have someone seemingly tailor-made for leadership (say, for a project), does it matter if he or she is not a committed Christian?

What light does this observation from Gonville ffrench-Beytagh shed on the matter? 'Happily, we are told in the Bible not to try to know or understand God, but to love him.'

NEWSPOINT

SCOTTISH CONFERENCE

Scottish Conference members (from left, front row): Lyndsay Orr, Chairman Jimmy Campbell, Pat Brownlee, Lilian Ayres; (back) Gordon Macrae, Hugh Hunter, Director Ken Prideaux-Brune, Headquarters Padre John Hull, Alex Michael.

The Scottish Conference of 70 members held in Selkirk in late October last year was an overwhelming success. Featuring The Baroness Elliot of Harwood, Director Ken Prideaux-Brune and Headquarters Padre John Hull as guest speakers, it took as its theme 'What kind of society do we want?'; based on the Archbishops' Call to the Nation.

Alex Michael reports on how inspiring all three speakers were. Ken stressed the importance of our responding to this Call to the Nation and the Baroness supported him wholeheartedly. She had great praise for Toc H and other organisations which bring people together.

John Hull spoke of how to get the 'whoops' out of life by getting nearer to God and, reports Alex, 'his talk was the tonic we all needed'.

Saturday evening saw a wonderful guest night, evening meal and entertainment and on Sunday morning the delegates walked to Heatherlie Church.

Alex reports 'John, who gave the address, took as his text St Matthew Chapter 6 verse 31 "Take no thought for tomorrow . . . ". I found it uplifting and I am sure so did many more. He told the story of the man who was bemoaning his trials to his friend and how his friend pointed to a cow looking over a wall and asked "Do you know why that cow is looking over that wall?" "No." "Because it can't see through it." If we looked up and over our anxieties more often it would do us a lot of good. Most of the congregation had very straight faces and when John said "You should have laughed there", one or two did, but I could see one or two of our dour Scottish Presbyterians saying to themselves "Yon mannie shouldna be sae freevolous in the House of the Lord". I regret to say that there are still a lot of people who believe that Laughter, Love and the Lord do not go together. I wish there were more John Hulls in the Ministry.'

FOLK '77

Dor Knap
Easter Weekend 7-11 April

If you think you can possibly put up with four whole days of singing, dancing, guitar chords, fiddles, lost chords, funny flutes, more singing (oh and don't forget the Morris Man!), then why not come along to Dor Knap this Easter? All details from Sue Gardner, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks.

WINTER ON THE WASHES

How about a winter weekend on the Ouse Washes of Cambridgeshire?

A weekend based on the Diocesan Conference House in the City of Ely is being arranged for 11 to 13 February. Plans include a full day on the Ouse Washes where there are RSPB and Wildfowl Trust Reserves, and an introduction to the old City of Ely and its history.

The cost of the full weekend (Friday supper to Sunday lunch) is £12. Further details from Rev Crispin White, 68 Thorpe Park Road, Peterborough, PE3 6LJ. Tel: 0733 63686.

CENTRE BOOKINGS

Details of bookings at Alison House, Dor Knap, Colsterdale and Port Penrhyn will appear in the February issue. There are still vacancies for dates early in the New Year so please contact the wardens direct (addresses in Toc H diary).

WHAT IS A 'COTSWOLD WEEK'?

John Callf, Dor Knap Committee Chairman

Readers may not be entirely clear as to what goes on at Dor Knap during Cotswold Week. We have come across some who have jumped to the conclusion that it was exclusively for members of branches in the Cotswolds. Others have assumed that it was simply an opportunity for whole families to have a week's summer holiday using Dor Knap as a base. Both assumptions miss the point.

Cotswold Week is an opportunity for men and women – not all of them necessarily members of Toc H – to spend a week of their summer holidays getting to know 'what makes the Cotswolds tick'. A comprehensive programme is prepared well in advance, comprising expeditions during the daytime to historical sites from Roman times onward, explorations of local architecture, agriculture, wild life, industry and local crafts. On some evenings local experts may come to Dor Knap to talk about aspects of Cotswold life.

Lest this should sound too much like a well regimented 'course', let us stress that there is plenty of time for roaming around at will, and for fun and games too. Nevertheless this is a holiday with a definite purpose, with a lot of time put into the planning, preparation and leadership. It will be seen that this is hardly the week for very young children who would soon become bored with some of the outings: likewise it would be hard lines on any grown-ups who had perforce to stay behind in order to entertain them. But teenagers fit in very well, derive much benefit, and make a lively contribution to the party.

The 1977 date for Cotswold Week is Saturday 13 – Saturday 20 August, and the leaders to whom your application should be directed are George and Kath Barnett, c/o Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks.

WELCOME

Photo: Chuck Painter

All Hallows Church takes on a new look when on 27 January the new vicar, **Peter Delaney**, starts his appointment.

A bachelor of 40, Peter Delaney approaches All Hallows full of new and positive ideas. Central to his vision for the church is his aim to make it a 'centre of communication' and, having trained as an artist and graphic designer and having spent some years in theatre and television, he gives the impression that he knows what he is talking about. He was an assistant producer for the National Broadcasting Company of America and, incidentally, married and buried Judy Garland.

'The thing that concerns me most', he says, 'is the communication of the Christian ministry. This has been sadly neglected, even though the Church is charged quite simply with the task: "Go and preach the Gospel" . . . People think that you can teach only with the cerebral, but there's a whole realm of tactile, emotional and visual responses which you can use.' Hence it is no surprise to find that Peter, like John Hull, sees every sphere of the Arts as an essential means of interpreting Christianity. Indeed, Peter's words might have come from John himself: 'Life is a celebration. Any community which has a reason for existence must be seen to be celebrating life.'

There are many very different strands of life at All Hallows which Peter sees as well worth tending. He sees 'an immediate responsibility' to those who regularly associate with the church; then there is another 'separate but very important life' with the commercial and business houses around Tower Hill, and also 'a real ministry to foreigners' who come because All Hallows is a tourist attraction and because of the links established by Toc H throughout the world.

Conscious of All Hallows' heritage of 1300 years, and conscious of the part played by our Movement in the last 60, Peter welcomes Toc H as 'a central part' of the church's life. He is keen to develop a much closer relationship with Toc H and says quite clearly that as vicar of All Hallows he would like to have a 'national group of friends' throughout the membership and staff.

It is true that the new vicar arrives from outside the Movement – which, he feels, gives him the advantage of a fresh approach – but he has known several Toc H members for many years, has for instance visited The Old House twice, and has worked with Winant volunteers. [He has spent a lot of time with young people, especially at the London University Church of Christ the King, and before that at Marylebone parish church where he started various music and drama groups.]

One point on which Peter is very clear is that both Toc H and All Hallows will have to work to justify their existence. Both, as far as he is concerned, exist to 'bring man closer to God' and both will have to face the questions: 'Why do we exist? What should we be doing? Where should we be going?'

He is not afraid to challenge Toc H and says that if we feel we have some special claim on All Hallows, we should be aware of the values for which All Hallows stands. He says that Toc H has always given him a confused impression as to the importance of its Christian principles and he asks us: 'What place do God and Christ have in the Movement now?'

We welcome Peter and hope that Toc H will prove a strength to him. For his part Peter would welcome invitations to visit branches and would also be glad if branches planning to visit All Hallows would let him know so that he can welcome them and offer a cup of tea.

Finally, from Peter: 'All Hallows seems to have produced men who have had a vision and made that vision real. I hope, with the help of this organisation, that the vision I see for All Hallows will become a reality.'

The following branches elected new members during November:

8 – Kimberworth (j)
6 – East Lancashire Youth Action (j) Group, Strode Park and Herne (j)
3 – Barnoldswick (j), Coomb (j)
2 – Ilminster (m), Netherton (m), Stamford (j)
1 – Bournemouth and Christchurch (j), Cardiff with Roath (j), Exmouth (m), Holland-on-Sea (w), Kendal (j), Kettering (m), Malvern (m), Marshalwick (j), Newton Abbot (m), Ripley (j), Runcorn (j) Group, Surrey District, Treforest (m), Wortley de Leeds (m).

A warm welcome to 46 new members.

OBITUARY

JACK SHAW
1901-76

Jack Shaw joined the staff at Belfast in his native Ulster in 1934 and after a spell there, he moved on to many postings both in the UK and also in New Zealand. Despite his long absences, Jack, a bachelor, retained his roots in Ulster and it was no surprise in 1966 that he retired there. He is remembered everywhere for his lucid and moving oratory, his wit and unobtrusive kindness.

Jack was a skilful chairman at Staff Conference and many other meetings, humorously diffusing the heat which often arises on such occasions. His chairmanship of the first Summer School at Bangor contributed more to its establishment as an annual event than might have been suspected at the time.

Jack's main recreations were listening to classical music and playing golf somewhat eccentrically. Even in these pursuits he managed to involve his friends in Toc H causes. A born raconteur, he was welcome at any ceilidh.

The golf continued after his retirement but over these latter years failing health and the happenings in Ulster, which depressed him terribly, made this less possible. After an illness of some weeks he died at Donaghadee on 25 October 1976. We remember him with joy.

Iain Fraser

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In September: George Duffill (Bexhill-on-Sea), Caroline Leeson (Swannington)
In October: Edward W Clarke (Ilminster), William Dent (Denny), Harold F Fletcher (Canterbury), W Brian Gillett (South Dorset District), Alice A Longman (Bolton District), Hilda M Renshaw (Mansfield Woodhouse), John H M Shaw (Northern Ireland)
In November: Sir Harold Stanford Cooper (South Sussex District), Luther Walker (Wortley de Leeds)

We give thanks for their lives.

THE OLD HOUSE

Members will know of plans to spend £40,000 on improving facilities in The Old House (reported in the March 1976 issue).

It was originally hoped to convert the annexe in the garden (known as the slessorium) into a home for the housekeeper, Lucienne Lamond Vanbrabant, and her family. Unfortunately with escalating costs this has proved to be too expensive and so the plans have been revised to turn the second floor of The Old House into a three-bedroomed self-contained flat for the family.

This releases the ground floor for more extensive use by visitors, and it will now contain a visitors' dining room, lounge and library, kitchen, bathroom and also one bedroom (which could be useful for someone in a wheelchair).

There will be a total of 19 visitors' beds: 13 in the main house and six in the Garden House. Moreover, in the main house every bedroom will have a washbasin; there is also a new bathroom and toilets on the first floor and central heating will be installed throughout.

Work has already started on the plumbing and the housekeeper's flat and it is hoped that the improvements will all be completed in time for summer parties this year.

The upgrading – which does not alter the character or main structure of the house in any way – should make it more attractive to parties from the UK and also to people in Poperinge itself.

Overall responsibility for this work is in the hands of the Talbot House Association, which is responsible for the administration of The Old House. The Talbot House Association is a charity registered under Belgian law, and meets each autumn in Poperinge for its AGM. It consists of British and Belgian members, who are nominated for election. Three fifths of its Executive Council must by law be Belgian; the Chairman is always British.

If you would like further details, please contact Greta Lynn, International Secretary, 42 Crutched Friars, London EC3N 2AL.

Photo: Sevenoaks Chronicle

St John's Toc H in Kent held their most successful fair in November and raised over £96 for work with the elderly.

London & Essex Guardian Newspapers

Norman Chidley of Loughton Branch receives £100 from Mrs Jessie Surridge of the local Townswomen's Guild for the Toc H emergency flashing light scheme. The money was raised through a Knit-in.

Photo: Paul Christie

'And did you hear . . . ' A chance to natter at the Cardiff old people's day centre, which was started after the success of the 'Bridge the Gap' project last August.

IN BRIEF...

■ Loughborough Joint Branch with the co-operation of the Social Services recently organised their fourth project for mentally handicapped children. Volunteers came from far and wide to look after the 25 children for a week and volunteer drivers from a local bus company took them out for trips.

■ Stow-on-the-Wold Branch, Gloucestershire, has initiated the idea of establishing a local Abbeyfield House for the elderly. The branch recently called a public meeting to elect a steering committee.

■ 'There is too much sex and violence on television, not to mention bad language', says Newbury Women's Branch. A representative of Toc H was speaking at a meeting in Newbury called by the Independent Broadcasting Authority, in order to hear the public's views.

■ Rochdale Branch recently took 32 elderly folk on a day trip to Fleetwood, via Blackpool and St Anne's-on-Sea.

■ Durrington Women's Branch, Sussex, tell us of their annual sale of work recently which raised more than £60 for branch funds.

■ Ged Bates, staff member in Birmingham, says that there are thousands of free rhododendron bushes at the RSPB Coomb Valley Bird Reserve in Staffs . . . you even get a super cottage with no electricity to live in for a whole weekend if you go and pick them. It's hard work getting them out of the ground but you can take home as many bushes as you can carry! If you want to know more ring Ged at 021-449 4668.

■ Frank Hutchinson of Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, brings greetings from Vancouver Branch in Canada. He says they are a thriving, active part of the Family and provide a wonderful welcome – including enormous salmon steaks!

■ Last November members of the Llandudno Junction Derby and Joan Club entertained the Conway Valley District, dressed in period costume of 1826 when the Telford Bridge was built.

■ Bexhill-on-Sea Branch, Sussex, are enjoying visiting mentally handicapped patients at Hellingly Hospital.

■ Don Gerry reports that the 40th birthday celebrations of St Thomas, Exeter Branch were a great success with no less than 165 people attending. Rev Ken Bloxham, Southern Area Padre, preached.

INSIGHT

The Rev Dr Paul Badham continues his series on 'The Jesus of History'.

Part Three: The Resurrection of Jesus

Three days after Jesus's death something very remarkable happened which completely changed the outlook of his former disciples and which caused Christianity to come into being as a distinctive religion. This is a historical fact of which anyone concerned with Christianity must take note.

We know from the evidence of early writers who were hostile to Christianity that the crucifixion of Jesus happened. It is referred to by Tactate Sanhedim 43a in the Jewish Talmud; it is mentioned by the Roman historian Tacitus; and by the Greek philosopher Celsus. We know also that shortly after Jesus's death the Christian church came into being and spread rapidly throughout the Roman Empire and that the one message of the earliest Christians was that Jesus had risen from the dead. Tacitus the Roman historian testifies to Christianity spreading 'like the plague', and at the very least the New Testament is evidence of what the earliest Christians thought, and the message of all the New Testament is that Jesus had in some sense conquered death.

FACT OF HISTORY

So the faith of Jesus's disciples in his resurrection is a fact of history. We know just how convinced they were: firstly, because they were all prepared to die as witnesses to their belief (the Greek word 'martyr' means witness); secondly, because they persuaded others to share their belief, and only a person utterly convinced himself would have any chance of persuading another to believe something as incredible as resurrection from the dead.

Having then established two historical facts: that Jesus was crucified; and that his disciples were convinced that he had risen from the dead, let me now draw attention to an important psychological fact. Dr Murray Parkes, an eminent psychiatrist says this about grief: 'I know of no illness which follows so stereotyped and predictable a course. At first there is a blunting of emotion and the person becomes numb. There is a tendency to brood over the death of the loved one. People become bitter and shut in on themselves'. This exactly fits Jesus's disciples at his death. For two days they were alarmed, depressed, shattered, and quite literally shut in on themselves behind locked doors. Then, quite suddenly they become full of faith, full of new life, new men. But how does this square with what Dr Parkes says of grief?

How do we explain the fact that in the case of Jesus's disciples the stereotyped pattern of grief was shattered and they became radiant and confident? They said it was because Jesus had appeared to them, and I can see no other explanation which will do justice to the historical and psychological facts I have mentioned here. I conclude therefore that Jesus really did appear to his disciples – that he really did conquer death.

But what was the nature of Jesus's resurrection? Did his corpse rise from the tomb into a new and glorious life? Or should we think rather of Jesus's personality or soul surviving the dissolution of his body?

There are New Testament texts to support either position. In favour of the resurrection of Jesus's corpse we have the empty tomb tradition, and those stories which talk of Jesus eating with his disciples, inviting Thomas to touch him, and referring to his flesh and bones. In favour of a more spiritual interpretation we have the testimony of St Paul and St Peter, and of those stories which speak of Jesus appearing and disappearing at will, and passing through locked doors.

TWO TRADITIONS

The two traditions can both be found in the New Testament and scholars are divided as to which tradition is the earlier and more fundamental. My personal view is that the spiritual understanding of Jesus's resurrection is earlier than the empty tomb tradition, that it makes better sense, and that it gives us firmer grounds for our own future hope.

The first books of the New Testament to be written were the letters of St Paul, and these are therefore the best evidence for the earliest beliefs. In 1 Corinthians 15 St Paul gives what looks like an official list of the appearances of Jesus and then he adds, 'last of all he appeared also to me'. This tells us that St Paul, who had obviously discussed the resurrection appearances of Jesus with the first disciples, felt that he had had the same experience on the road to Damascus as they had had on the first Easter morning. St Paul's experience was quite explicitly an inward experience. 'God revealed his Son within me' is a literal translation of Galatians 1/15, and in Acts 26/19 Paul calls his experience 'a heavenly vision'.

I do not think St Paul could possibly have known of the empty tomb tradition. In 1 Corinthians 15/50 he says 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God'. So St Paul could not have shared the belief that Jesus's corpse had been raised to heaven, and indeed St Paul does rule this out in 2 Corinthians 5/7 where he says he, Paul, would like to leave his home in the body, and go to be with the Lord. The implication of this passage is that Jesus had left his home in the body, and gone to an 'eternal glory beyond all comparison' with this earthly life..

This understanding of Jesus's resurrection is confirmed by the teaching of 1 Peter 3/18 which speaks of Jesus being put to death in the flesh and being made alive in the spirit. In 1 Peter 4/6 we see the view expressed that although the dead have received in the body 'the sentence common to all men, they might in the Spirit be alive with the life of God'.

In both 1 Peter and in St Paul's writings we thus see a spiritual understanding of Jesus's resurrection set forward, and used as grounds for our own future hope. This seems to me very important. If the message of Easter was that Jesus's corpse did not see corruption but rose from its grave and ascended into heaven, then we would have no basis for future hope. Our corpses see corruption. They do not physically rise and ascend to the sky. Instead they simply disintegrate in swift fire or slow decay. By contrast if the message of Easter, is as St Paul and St Peter believed that Jesus's soul survived the dissolution of his body, then we have ground for hoping that our souls also will triumph over death.

In Compline, the late evening service used in theological colleges and religious communities,a prayer is offered up, 'that when our bodies lie in the dust our souls may live with thee'. I think this prayer sums up beautifully the significance for us of the resurrection message.

VISIONARY EXPERIENCES

What then were the resurrection appearances of Jesus? I suggest that they were visionary experiences communicated by Jesus's living personality to the minds of his disciples. These experiences were real in the sense that the disciples did not dream them up for themselves by some process of wishful thinking. Their lives could not have been transformed by any subjective illusion, but only by a visionary experience genuinely coming from an external source. This does not mean that a camera or tape recording would have been able to perceive what was happening any more than St Paul's companions fully shared his experience on the road to Damascus. We are told in Matthew 28/17 that when the disciples saw Jesus 'some worshipped him; but some doubted', and this would seem strong evidence that the experience was mediated through the minds, rather than the eyes, of the disciples. It was an inner vision rather than an outward sighting. But it was none the less an overwhelming reality which changed their outlook on life.

Because of their wish to stress the reality of Jesus's appearances there was a natural tendency over the years to make the stories increasingly physical in character, and so the tradition of the empty tomb and of Jesus eating with his disciples gradually developed. But I believe that careful analysis of the sources can help us to uncover the earliest and more spiritual tradition and to see its significance for us.

BE STILL then....

John Hull, Headquarters Padre

This is the first time the Bordon letter has appeared in 'Point Three'. It is accompanied by a suggested theme for daily prayer because more and more people have made known their need for such a thing.

I am convinced that the strength of the Movement lies here and that this pattern should be shared by as many people as possible.

These pointers for prayer are used daily in All Hallows, at Headquarters and by people throughout the country. Further suggestions for thoughts on these themes are to be found in 'Yours is the Glory'.

At Headquarters, we have our prayers at 10.25 am and it would be lovely if you could share that time with us.

DAY	THEME	SPECIAL THOUGHTS
1	Thanksgiving	Our own families
2	Unity of purpose	Toc H in North Wales and North West
3	Silence	Toc H in Australia and New Zealand
4	Science and religion	Toc H in West Midlands
5	Politics – national and international	Toc H in South Africa and Rhodesia
6	The production of food	Toc H in South West Region
7	Faith in life	Dor Knap; Alison House; Port Penrhyn; Colsterdale; Langdale
8	Stewardship	Finance Department
9	Industrial relations	Toc H in North Eastern Region
10	Human rights and responsibilities	Toc H in South America
11	Ministry of healing	Hospital service of Toc H; work with the handicapped
12	A forgiving spirit	Toc H in Ireland; Canada; Paris; Hong Kong; Jamaica; Lesotho
13	Love in human relationships	Principal Officers of Toc H
14	Living as a family	Marks and Centres
15	A daily rule of life	Headquarters administrative staff
16	Communications	Editorial and Public Relations
17	The different generations	Toc H in East Midlands
18	Our neighbourhood in towns and cities	The Chairman; Central Executive; Central Councillors
19	Lonely and despairing people	The work of Toc H with elderly and lonely people
20	Racial harmony	Toc H work for racial harmony
21	Our responsibility towards developing countries	India (Pannikampatti)
22	Education	Winant and Clayton Volunteers and USA
23	A new dimension of life	Toc H in South Eastern Region
24	International co-operation and peace	International Department
25	A child-like disposition	South Eastern Regional Office
26	Conversion to the way of Christ	Europe – Belgium and the Old House
27	Protection and safety in the community	Toc H in Germany (BAOR)
28	Leisure and recreation	Toc H in Southern Region
29	The whole Church	All Hallows
30	The day's work	Scotland
31	Doing the truth	Ourselves

For detailed lists of individual names, please send to Headquarters Padre at Wendover.

BORDON COMPANY LETTER

Sue Cumming

'TEACH US TO LIVE TOGETHER . . .'

Whoever was responsible for fashioning the Toc H prayer must have been a keen student of human nature and the weaknesses that beset man-made institutions. Whether the prayer was a result of experience, or whether the writer knew the kind of things that members of the Movement would find themselves up against sooner or later, doesn't matter, but I find it a salutory reminder that things worthwhile are hard-won and that what we sometimes think are problems of today are in fact nothing new in the history of the human race.

What are these problems?They are so many and various, with an infinite number of variable details, that there's no point in trying to pick on any particular ones here. However, their effects are often similar, and it is here that the prayer serves to remind us of our calling.

It says 'Teach us to live together in love and joy and peace'. Yes, this is something we have to learn, have to consciously practise when the conditions seem unfavourable; to be able 'to live together in love' requires an act of will, and a constant renewal of the commitment. Ideally, of course, love for one's fellow should be spontaneous and completely unselfconscious, but that is a state of grace towards which most of us have to grow, slowly, patiently, and often painfully.

'To check all bitterness, disown discouragement.' This sometimes seems to be a necessary daily exercise, so often does it seem that our ideas and efforts are thwarted by circumstances beyond our control, or by human failure – ours as well as other people's. It's easy to give rein to our feelings and lay all the blame on others, but that's only one step away from the bitter and unrelenting pessimism which suffocates new ideas and initiatives, and sees none of the potential good but only the apparent failure in any opportunity to serve. A lesson I had to learn when I was a stormy, intolerant teenager was to check my ready condemnation of other people. I was told that if I couldn't find anything good to say about a person, then I needn't say anything about them at all. Criticism, if it's necessary, should be open, honest, fair and free from all bitterness.

'To practise thanksgiving, and to leap with joy to any task for others.' Not only are we reminded to check negative attitudes but to actually adopt positive ones. The people whose example brings me up most sharply with myself sometimes are the ones who cheerfully endure situations which I would find difficult to bear even for a week, and who are con-

stantly aware of the needs of others and how they can help, even in the simplest way. The 'leaping for joy' is an important ingredient too. There are too many volunteer martyrs around, people who self-consciously and self-righteously 'do good'. Toc H has never been, and I hope never will be, for people such as these. Joy is a spontaneous and unselfconscious emotion and cannot be feigned. The kind of service we are called to give is that which is an automatic expression of our love for other people – again an ideal, a state of grace, but again one towards which we can grow. Help which is grudgingly given shrivels both the giver and the receiver.

However, even these broad generalisations of attitude and response are themselves details of the real task to which any member of Toc H commits himself, and the prayer says it twice, at the beginning and the end. We are here to 'see our duty as God's will' and 'to work for His Kingdom in the wills of men'. Those are two very high-sounding phrases, and not nearly as practical as the bits in the middle. Well, for those who are committed Christians. Toc H provides a context for the practical out-working of their faith, being as it always was intended to be, an experiment in weekday Christianity, and even committed Christians need nourishing soil in which to grow. Those who feel reluctant to call themselves Christian, yet who are willing to test out the validity of Christian values and a Christian way of life – and let's face it, it is often people such as these who in practice put professing Christians to shame – can hopefully find here people whose faith and lives put the whole experience of living into perspective.

That's why it is not what we do but how we do it that is so important – in fact it's not in the doing, but by 'being' that we help people. It's the wholeness and strength of a person who loves God that is the light shining in the darkness, and if we see that as the thing worth striving for above all else in our life, remembering the practical details at the heart of the prayer, the effects we have on the lives of others could be immeasurable.

GOOD BOOKS

Celebration of Faith by Austin Farrer. Hodder Religious Series.
Said or Sung by Austin Farrer. Faith Press. (Both short talks).
Encountering Light by Gonville ffrench-Beytagh. Fontana.
Mr God This is Anna by Finn. Collins. (A 'whoops' book).
One Volume Bible Commentary by William Neil. Hodder & Stoughton.
Yours is the Glory by Rev Bob Knight and Ken Prideaux-Brune.
Toc H Publications Department, Wendover.
Daily Bible reading notes recommended:
BRF Notes (obtainable from your local church).
The Soldier's Armoury (published by the Salvation Army).

LETTERS

GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

'Growing old gracefully' is such a sad letter. All the writer can now do – at the age of 70, mark you – is sit and dream about the Four Points of the Compass, like so many others who join the 'do nothing brigade', from not only the Christian faith – some do that much younger.

What would this country be like if everyone followed his example? Many many church wardens would vanish overnight for one thing. And if the old Brigade – led by Churchill – had done the same in 1939, I shudder to think where we would be now.

Of course he won't even be taking *Point Three*, but if by any chance he is seeing his annual subscription out to the end of the year, I do really hope he has read 'A message for older members of Toc H', just two letters on.

Rev C A Cardale
Toc H Padre, Newton Abbot, Devon

In reply to Freddie Petch 'Growing old gracefully' in the November issue: surely he is joking or is it an effort to promote discussion?

At 68 I was instrumental in founding a branch. At 70, having left behind my greenhouse, I built another 60 ft long, in which I produce half hardy plants and pelargoniums etc for a sale in May for Toc H funds. This year I realised £250. I have already produced 700 rooted cuttings for next May.

I am now 76 and the *active* jobby of the branch. In fact at least seven of the branch are in their 70 s and we are a *live* branch.

As one old serviceman to another, and to quote an old song: 'What do you want to live to 99 for?' It's better to wear out than to rust out.

Anonymous

OUT OF YOUR ROCKING CHAIR!

Poor old Freddie Petch, it must be awful to reach such a decision after a lifetime of 28 years in Toc H; no wonder he's seen about 20 branches fold up if they are of the same mind as he. Of course he says he's still a Toc H man but would like to retire and let someone else carry on. He must be really tired after his hard working 28 years.

Now a word to you Freddie: I'm the only surviving active member of the old Blackpool Branch and so joined up with the St Anne's Branch. Of course I've not had 28 years in Toc H, only 50, and at the age of 82 can still help one or two people who are less fortunate than myself; such as a visit to an old people's home to give them an hour of music from records on tape; a visit to the local hospital to have a word with patients who don't have visitors etc etc. But to talk of retiring at whatever age so long as there are things to be done – come off it Freddies and such, take your shawls off and get out of your rocking chairs. There's still plenty to do if we are to keep Toc H going and setting an example to the rest of this old and troubled world.

Yours still a young olden in Toc H,

Sam 'Blinks' Brentnall
Blackpool, Lancs.

NEVER TOO OLD

'Tis sad to think that the retirement age has cropped up again. It has bothered me for the past five or six years; I am not old in that sense, it's just ill-health that is taking its toll. Nevertheless I do feel that a 'bunch of old fogies' can still be of use to Toc H and the community at large.

We are now a mixture of men bedevilled by ill-health and 'old age' if you like, but this has not stopped us holding a charity dance and making a profit of £100 shared between Surrey projects, Penrhyn and a mini-bus. Old age does not stop one member past three score years and ten from visiting various organisations within Surrey to expound the beauty and joy of the wonderful countryside. (Why not book him for Dor Knap for a weekend? You won't regret it.) It's because we both love the countryside and what it has to offer that we wish to share our joy with others; any donations received from these talks are put into Toc H funds and the Family Purse benefits.

Just because we have both retired doesn't mean that God's work must stop; far from it. The benefits we have received via Toc H must be shared with others. The important thing to remember is that the Lord has fixed no retirement age for persons (despite the Bible quote of three score years and ten). When he thinks you have served His purpose here on earth He will hold His arms and say 'Come unto me and I will give you rest.' Until that time comes I shall continue 'To toil and not to seek for rest'.

Ken Western
Surbiton, Surrey

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

COUNCIL OPTIMISM

Not having been to Central Council for several years I was very impressed with the air of optimism that pervaded the whole weekend. I can see Toc H moving – becoming alive again – yes, moving *forward*. I liked the look of the younger staff, I liked their enthusiasm, whereas

LETTERS (cont)

eight years ago the staff (some of them anyhow) looked tired, staid, with a look about them of 'the future is full of gloom, the future members and staff are not so good as us' – the holier than thou attitude. I too feel that Central Council has elected the right CEC.

When I got home and was able to review the whole weekend I found I was thinking of the words of wisdom that were spoken by our Director, Ken Prideaux-Brune and our Padre, John Hull.

Another highlight of the weekend was the hiving off of the central councillors into different cells discussing various points of Toc H in great depth.

Doug Sobey
Longlevens, Gloucester

SEEK YE FIRST

At Central Council there was considerable discussion regarding the administration of our Toc H capital resources. Some pointed out that, at our present rate of annual deficit, the Movement could collapse in bankruptcy in not many years; others, led by Keith Beck, reminded us of Our Lord's instruction 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow . . . Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof'.

Considering these points later, I was reminded of the rich young man who asked Jesus what he should do to insure spiritual revival. Maybe he hoped for such advice as 'Invest in ICI (Israelite Citrus Industries!?) and use the interest in charity'. He was sadly discomfited when Jesus finally said 'Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven', adding to His followers 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God'.

Considering how we had discussed whether we should preserve our capital and keep our expenses within our budget limits or go forward in a venture of faith, spending whatever is necessary to fulfil our aims in the service of God and man, and rely on the generosity and money-raising efforts of the membership, I could but wonder what advice our Master might give us on the administration of our wealth for the spiritual survival of Toc H.

I still wonder. Let us continue to ask Him.

Charles Potts
Lymington, New Forest District

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TOC H WILD WEST SHOW

May I applaud the concept of a 'guest editorial' (*Point Three* becoming frontier minded?) but I should like to offer a brief comment on it and also on the not unrelated letter from our distinguished Retired Wing Commander.

To describe 'what was new in the Sixties' as 'frontier work' is misleading on two counts. For those who were attracted to Toc H in the Thirties much of it was then the norm and certainly not regarded as 'frontier work' by what was largely a youth movement anyway. I take the point that it came as adventurous new discovery to younger members in the Sixties but for some of us it was simply a welcome rediscovery of first principles.

However, that is not important. Two other matters are. It is a natural development in the young buck to seek a trial of strength with the dominant male and, if defeated, to seek to establish a rival commune outside the recognised territory of the herd. It is not natural to seek to retaliate by destroying the herd structure which the apparent advocacy of 'protest activities' and 'search for understanding through drugs' seems to imply.

What is meant by a 'frontier Movement' such as we are claimed to have always been? Surely not a 'Wild West Show'? What we have always claimed to be is a Movement pledged to the reconciliation of man to man and man to God and the frontiers are surely those of the Kingdom of God? The militant Christian will no doubt point to the violent episode in the Temple as justification for disruption, something that may have proved the humanity as well as the divinity of Jesus, but that was a cleansing rather than a destructive operation.

It is also of prime importance that we recognise that Toc H is not and never has been an 'agency' in any other sense than that of providing people with a means of finding their own vocation, using that word in its true sense – an import/export agency, if you like. The 'constitution' of Toc H makes no provision for 'retired members' for the simple reason that it was never intended to be a lifelong repository of talent, crusading zeal or frontier forces. Membership, perhaps, but the activity for which that was an educational and training ground and the pioneering pressures were intended for wider fields. Retirement ages are of no consequence but only a steady flow of people, rather than activities, makes Toc H a Movement.

Colin Campbell
Petts Wood, Kent

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

SEX FILM

Having read the Rev Keith Beck's letter in November's *Point Three* I feel I need to say that, although I have no theological background which he necessarily has, I find myself at variance with his statement concerning the position in which Christians are placed in this matter.

The feeling that I had at the outset, and still have, is that it should devolve on the various branches of the Church to take what action was in their power to crush this particular 'demon' and for that reason it is not necessary for Toc H to take up the cudgels – because Toc H is merely composed of a small percentage of members from all the churches.

Whilst Keith Beck has stated that he 'has no desire to see such a film made' he has not suggested any new way by which it could be prevented – and in that respect one is just left in mid-air.

However, I am very pleased to read in the *Daily Telegraph* of 11 November that the Synod of the Church of England has already reached a unanimous decision to 'urge the Government and the film industry to do nothing to facilitate the appearance of the film' – the Bishop of Truro stating that 'the film script debased God and humanity'.

To comment further on the indecisive nature of our Area Padre's letter, I do not understand why he should draw any comparison between the imaginative output of a warped and completely depraved mind, and the shortcomings of many Christians in their daily lives – for these things are far from being on the same parallel!

Jack Dare
Paignton, Devon

I have no doubt that the sentiments expressed by Keith Beck represent a sincere and honest depth of feeling on his part. I must confess however that I do not agree with some of the points he puts forward to sustain his argument. To say that we have no right to refuse entry to undesirables and if we do so it makes us into some sort of dictatorship, is an absurdity.

What Keith omits from his letter is the fact that Mr Thorensen has already been prevented from making his proposed film in his own country, and Sweden can hardly be counted among one of the communist or fascist states by any standards. If the gentleman in question had decided to make a film in Egypt about the sex life of Mohammed or in Burma on the same theme about Buddha, he would have been given very short shrift by both those countries. Why then should we have to put up with these international muckrakers?

John Morgan
Ruislip, Middlesex

Was it really necessary for the Rev Keith Beck to add to the *Point Three* reading matter such a lot of controversial subject?

Most of us are quite aware from what source we can obtain information on the laws of the land – and we are glad to read that he can affirm the creeds – but surely the heresies he mentions are on his part when he queries the sex life of Jesus?

As Christians we know that sex can and should be a part of happily married life; our Lord was never married and there is no suggestion in the Gospels that he wished to enter the joys of the marital state.

Why not give a lead Mr Beck, if you must write letters, to preserving that which is true, honest etc etc. But may he lead us with 'Think on these things of good report' – the Phillipians were advised to do so!

M A B
A 50 years happily married (in every sense) Toc H member

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

WARDEN MANOR

My wife and I recently had a most enjoyable and unique experience as well as a very Toc H one in a 12th century manor house in a most delightful setting on the Isle of Sheppey, Kent. We were invited to help out two days per week for the season to relieve the host, John Cole, who also has a full-time commitment with Help the Aged.

As you probably have guessed we were at Warden Manor. In this short time of ten weeks we have made friends with 300 people from all over England, and the Isle of Wight, and what a grand lot they were. We have learned of the joys and disappointments that are the lot of a hostel host. At Warden a very full programme was maintained and an unhappy countenance was an impossibility. The games and tournaments were attacked with gusto; the concerts were never lacking in talent and variety; the weekly pageant was most revealing. The sausage barbeque both warmed and filled the body, and the weekly coach outing through Kent was very well attended. Each week had its comedian. And to think that this atmosphere has gone on now for the best part of 40 years makes us wonder just how many folk have benefited from this holiday fellowship, and have reason to be grateful for Vic and Bill Martin in the past and now John and Jackson Cole for keeping the old house going in the face of many difficulties.

The purpose of our letter is in the hope that someone, somewhere in our Movement is keeping a vigilant watch to see that this will continue to provide for many Toc H members for at least another 40 years.

Jim and Lily Curran
Ilford, Essex

Again a lovely week's holiday at Warden Manor on the Isle of Sheppey: good company, good food and lots of fun. Everyday something different: tennis, putting, croquet, bowls, table tennis, skittles, walks and bathing.

Sunday evening we had a discussion. One evening Vic Martin who used to be host at Warden, came over to tell us some tales of his days in the navy. We had a bonfire on Wednesday, ate sausages and sang songs. Thursday saw us dashing around getting ready for the pageant to be held in the evening. Friday we had a concert and what talent was found! Prizes were given out for the winners of the games played through the week.

This year I took two friends who had not been before: Doris and Jim. They did enjoy themselves and said they wanted to go again.

But I have been informed that this will be the last year of Warden Manor.

Oh, no I hope not and so do many more people, for we have had such wonderful times there and were hoping to have many more.

Please, please, a lot of us say don't close it.

Freda Hurt
Mansfield, Notts
Mr C Hennessey, Mr and Mrs Norman Brew, Mr C Sheldon, Mrs D Bonser, Mr J Moore, Miss H Fairweather

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

NO STONE UNTURNED

I have been giving some thought lately to the machinery for expansion and extension in Toc H.

Would it be practical to run a column in *Point Three* in which notice could be given that a new extension to a particular town or village was being tackled? An address could be given to which *existing* members could write to give the names and addresses of likely potential members *personally known to them* who could then be followed up by the 'pioneers' in that place.

I imagine that every Toc H member can think of some acquaintance that would take to the Movement 'like a duck to water' and I think that this is a way in which such a reserve could be tapped (even if the recommendation would have to be made anonymously!)

If the idea proved fruitful it could well be extended to help recruitment to existing branches.

Anyway, I thought I'd pass on the idea to you – and only hope that I'm not being *too* optimistic about human nature!

Rev Basil Jones
Northwich, Cheshire

I hope District secretaries and correspondents will let us know of such plans. 'Point Three' can help you with extension programmes in more ways than one – we're not here just to report on past events! Ed.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

HAVE YOU SEEN THEM?

Can you please help me with an appeal?

A few years ago when I was at Mark V in Southampton, Tubby visited us and showed us Roman nails found in Palestine which dated from the time of Christ's crucifixion. It was thought that this had been the type of nail used for the crucifixion.

Following Padre 'Polly' Perkins' appeal for a design for a cross to stand on the altar in the Old House, Poperinge, I suggested that this could be made in the style of Tubby's nails. Polly has told me, however, that no-one at Headquarters remembers the nails. Tubby had a number of nails and must have handed them out to people.

If anyone has one of these nails which he or she could send to me I would be grateful and would return it as soon as I had established its shape and proportions.

David Pope
Swindon, Wilts

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

DOR KNAP BOOKINGS

Some five years ago you were good enough to publish a letter in which I drew attention to the lamentable number of last-minute cancellations of Dor Knap bookings. In it I pointed out the consequence that for many of the best weekends of the year Dor Knap stood empty when it might well have been occupied by folk who would have been only too thankful to use it.

Having once complained, it would be wrong if I were not now to report that in 1976 to date (25 November) there has not been one single cancellation, and Dor Knap has been used to the full. Incidentally this has been a tremendous help in our efforts to balance the books in a very difficult economic year. Well done all concerned!

John Callf
Chairman, Dor Knap Committee

Thinking about EXTENSION?
Think POINT THREE

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Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 3p a word (minimum 30p) to Point Three magazine. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks. Telephone: 0296 623911

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